

# 6 FAH-2 H-360 TECHNICAL EVALUATION CRITERIA AND PLAN

*(TL: CORH-1; 08-21-1997)*

## 6 FAH-2 H-361 PURPOSE OF TECHNICAL EVALUATION

*(TL: CORH-1; 08-21-1997)*  
*(State Only)*

a. Federal acquisition statutes and regulations require that both negotiated and sealed bid contracts be competitively awarded to the maximum extent practicable, with the objective of obtaining the contracts most advantageous to the U.S. Government.

b. When needed items can be described precisely in a purchase description, and more than one offeror can be expected to be sufficiently knowledgeable of the business to provide a reasonable proposal, the most advantageous proposal can usually be determined by comparing proposed fixed prices.

c. Often, however, there is a need for items or services which cannot be precisely described, or the Contracting Officer believes that it will be necessary to talk to offerors before making an award. In such cases, competitive proposals will be solicited, for which a technical evaluation will be necessary, in addition to price comparison.

d. In the competitive proposal process, contractor selection involves evaluation and scoring of both the technical and business aspects of the proposals submitted. **The solicitation document, or Request for Proposal (RFP), should instruct the offerors to submit two separate proposals, a technical proposal and a price proposal.**

e. Factors other than price, such as each offeror's degree of expertise and experience and the relative technical merits of the processes or approaches the contractor proposes, may be important in determining advantage to the U.S. Government. FAR 15.605(d) states that "the primary consideration should be which offeror can perform the contract in a manner most advantageous to the Government, as determined by evaluation of proposals according to the evaluation criteria..." established in the RFP.

## 6 FAH-2 H-362 PURPOSE OF TECHNICAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

(TL: CORH-1; 08-21-1997)  
(State Only)

a. Preparation of technical evaluation criteria is second only to preparation of the Statement of Work (SOW) as the most critical component of the acquisition. Taken together, the SOW and technical evaluation criteria establish the ground rules for an acquisition. The care with which they are developed will have a direct bearing on the quality of the goods or services received.

b. The SOW identifies contract objectives and the tasks required to achieve them. The technical evaluation criteria identify the contractor and proposal attributes that have been determined are required to perform the tasks. A COR should develop the technical evaluation criteria at the same time he or she is writing the SOW.

c. Because each acquisition is unique, each RFP must identify the evaluation criteria and the relative importance of each criterion so that prospective offerors are aware of the basis for the evaluation of proposals. Criteria should be qualitative and readily understood by both the offerors and evaluators. Evaluation criteria permit an assessment of the merits of proposals against standards, rather than against other proposals. The FAR forbids evaluation by comparing proposals against each other; each proposal must be evaluated by comparing it with the solicitation.

d. All parties, including the General Accounting Office and courts that hear U.S. Government contract disputes, understand that subjective judgments by U.S. Government officials are involved in properly evaluating contractor proposals. Because the evaluation criteria serve as a standard against which all proposals will be evaluated, it is imperative that they emphasize the factors which are critical in the selection of a contractor.

e. **No evaluation criteria other than those set forth in the solicitation can be used in evaluating the proposals.** This is an absolute that has repeatedly been sustained by the GAO, the General Services Board of Contract Appeals, and the courts.

# **6 FAH-2 H-363 DEVELOPING THE TECHNICAL EVALUATION CRITERIA**

*(TL: CORH-1; 08-21-1997)*  
*(State Only)*

The technical evaluation criteria should be specific and as detailed as necessary for evaluation of the technical proposals. The following guidelines should be considered in developing technical evaluation criteria:

(1) Use criteria that relate directly to the purpose or objective of the acquisition and that will truly discriminate between proposals.

(2) Limit the number of criteria and sub-criteria so that, when scoring, the evaluations do not become mathematically "diluted". Too many criteria may result in an offeror achieving a relatively high score while scoring poorly on a crucial criteria.

(3) Identify and describe the key programmatic concerns that the offerors must be aware of in preparing their proposals.

(4) Use criteria that are mutually exclusive or do not correlate with one another. If one criterion is dependent on another, use one or the other, but not both.

## **6 FAH-2 H-363.1 Selecting Evaluation Criteria**

*(TL: CORH-1; 08-21-1997)*  
*(State Only)*

6 FAH-2 H-363 Exhibit H-363.1 gives sample criteria and questions to aid CORs in developing evaluation criteria. Use them only if they apply to a specific acquisition.

## **6 FAH-2 H-363.2 Ranking the Criteria**

*(TL: CORH-1; 08-21-1997)*  
*(State Only)*

a. The Request for Proposal must state the basis upon which the contract award will be made when award is based on factors other than lowest probable cost or price. However, statute requires that price or cost to the U.S. Government shall be included as an evaluation criteria. If the quality of the product or service is more important than its cost, then the solicitation must so state. Further, if the evaluation formula is based on an anticipated volume of services or if offerors must attain some level of capacity, the solicitation must disclose this information.

b. Two principal methods used in U.S. Government contracting to indicate relative importance are numerical points and adjective descriptions. The COR and Contracting Officer must decide whether to include the actual points or an indication of the relative importance of the criteria.

c. The technical evaluation criteria are usually subdivided into factors and sub-factors. Each of the factors and sub-factors is assigned a number of points (if the numerical point system is used). For ease of calculation, make the total number of points for all technical factors (plus the number of points for cost/price if points are assigned thereto) add to 100. Then make the precise allocation of numerical points to the factors and subfactors correspond to the relative importance of each in this particular acquisition.

d. The Comptroller General has ruled that:

(1) If criteria are weighted by numbers or percent, the highest is displayed first, the rest in descending order of rank;

(2) If narrative is used, the specific items are displayed by weight of importance to the project, again in descending order of rank; and

(3) If one criterion far outweighs all of the others and it is not assigned a percentage or numerical weight value in the solicitation, then narrative in the solicitation must indicate its great importance.

e. As an example, points have been assigned to a set of evaluation criteria as shown below. This example is for illustrative purposes only; the COR and Contracting Officer will develop criteria and assign points specific to a particular acquisition.

Factor		Points
(1)	<b>Technical Approach</b>	<u>50</u>
a.	Project Planning and Perception of Objective	25
b.	Feasibility of Technical Approach	25
(2)	<b>Personnel Qualifications</b>	<u>30</u>
a.	Capabilities of Key Personnel	15
b.	Record of Past Performance	15
(3)	<b>Other Resources Availability</b>	<u>20</u>
a.	Availability of Facilities	10
b.	Availability of Equipment	10

f. This example shows technical points equalling 100; no specific points are assigned for cost. Depending on the circumstances, it may be desired to assign points to cost/price. This is the general practice for procurements abroad. Either way is acceptable. If points are assigned to cost/price, then the points for the technical evaluation criteria should be adjusted so that when they are added to the price points, the total equals 100. If cost/price is not assigned points, then the solicitation must state the relative importance of cost/price versus technical.

## 6 FAH-2 H-364 RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF TECHNICAL AND COST/PRICE CONSIDERATIONS

(TL: CORH-1; 08-21-1997)  
(State Only)

When cost/price is not assigned actual points which reflects the relationship of cost/price in comparison to the technical criteria, a statement must be included in the RFP. The Contracting Officer must ensure that this statement accurately reflects the appropriate balance between price and the technical factors. The following are examples of narrative statements that may be used to reflect this relationship.

(1) "You are advised that the evaluation of technical proposals and cost/price are of approximately equal value."

(2) "You are advised that paramount consideration shall be given to the evaluation of technical proposals rather than cost/price."

(3) "You are advised that paramount consideration shall be given to cost/price rather than the evaluation of technical proposals."

## **6 FAH-2 H-365 TECHNICAL EVALUATION PLANS**

*(TL: CORH-1; 08-21-1997)*

*(State Only)*

a. Ideally, a technical evaluation plan is prepared and submitted with the Procurement Request Package; however, it **must** be prepared prior to receipt of proposals for evaluation. The plan conforms to the evaluation criteria contained in the RFP, and is essentially a tool for the Technical Evaluation Panel to use when evaluating proposals. The plan ordinarily includes an agreed upon set of adjectives or descriptive phrases defining degrees of technical merit and agreed upon numerical equivalents for those adjectives. This process establishes a systematic and uniform basis for proposal evaluation, provides a degree of objectivity, and eliminates much of the artificial scoring variation associated with strict or lenient raters.

b. Generally, the plan itself is not made a part of the solicitation. The evaluation criteria and assigned weights (if used) is all that is necessary to be in the solicitation. The plan is prepared by the COR (with the assistance of the Contracting Officer, if necessary), and reviewed by all members of the Technical Evaluation Panel.

c. A sample evaluation plan is presented in 6 FAH-2 H-365 . Please note that this is only **one** of many formats, which may be used. It is not intended to be regarded as a definitive model applicable in any or all situations. In this example, evaluators may record their points and comments directly on the plan. However, a separate format may be developed for recording the points and comments. (See 6 FAH-2 H-424.1 and 6 FAH-2 H-424 Exhibit H-424.1 for an example). Contracting Officers may also have sample formats, which they prefer to use. The COR should ask the Contracting Officer if he or she has a preference with respect to the plan format. For example, A/OPE has developed a plan for use by posts abroad for the acquisition of local guard services.

## **6 FAH-2 H-366 THROUGH H-369 UNASSIGNED**

# **6 FAH-2 H-363 Exhibit H-363 SAMPLE CRITERIA AND QUESTIONS**

*(TL: CORH-1; 08-21-1997)*

The following sample criteria and questions are provided as examples to aid CORs in developing evaluation criteria. Use them only if they apply to a specific acquisition. The questions relating to the criteria may aid in criteria selection and proposal evaluation. They are typical of the questions evaluators should consider when developing the evaluation criteria.

## **TECHNICAL APPROACH**

### **a. Project Planning and Perception of Objective**

Does the proposal provide a comprehensive statement of the problem, scope, and purpose of the project and demonstrate a clear understanding of the intent, requirements, and contract objectives?

### **b. Feasibility of Technical Approach**

Is the approach consistent with stated goals and objectives? Do milestone and/or phasing charts illustrate a logical sequence of proposed events?

### **c. Responsiveness and Compliance with Requirements**

Does the proposed approach comply with the requirements specified in the Statement of Work?

### **d. Special Technical Factors**

(1) Innovative or Unique Ideas

(2) Quality Control

Is there an effective administrative framework for maintaining quality control? Are data collection techniques practical and timely and do they reflect an awareness of regulatory constraints, potential problems, and proposed solutions?

## **PERSONNEL QUALIFICATIONS**

### **a. Capabilities of Key Personnel**

Is talent and skill as important as extensive knowledge? How much actual knowledge is required? Does the proposal indicate which key personnel will be used on this project?

## **6 FAH-2 H-363 Exhibit H-363 — Continued**

**b. Sufficient number of available personnel with appropriate knowledge, experience, and skills**

Is the staff competent and experienced in the skills required in the Statement of Work? Do the resumes of the staff reflect both academic qualifications and relevant experience?

**c. Experience in Similar or Related Fields**

Do key personnel and staff have experience in the field of effort necessary to accomplish the tasks set forth in the Statement of Work?

**d. Organization and Management Practices**

Does the proposal indicate ability to manage the project including subcontractor efforts? Is there a management plan and demonstrated previous management experience?

**e. Record of Past Performance**

Does the offeror have a history of effective and timely performance on previous contracts? (Past performance is required to be an evaluation criteria for all competitively negotiated contracts exceeding \$1 million. This threshold will go down to \$500,000 for acquisitions issued on or after July 1, 1997, and to \$100,000 for acquisitions issued on or after January 1, 1999.)

**OTHER RESOURCES AVAILABILITY**

**a. Availability of Adequate Facilities**

Does the offeror have adequate facilities available to accomplish the effort and prevent interruptions to work?

**b. Availability of Adequate Equipment**

Does the offeror have or has it shown it has access to the appropriate equipment for accomplishing the proposed effort? Is there a need for Government-furnished equipment/property?

**c. Availability of Adequate Financing**

Is the offeror financially capable of supporting the business requirements? Are there resources available for equipment and payroll?

# 6 FAH-2 H-365 Exhibit 6 FAH-2 H-365 SAMPLE EVALUATION PLAN

(TL: CORH-1; 08-21-1997)

**Technical Evaluation—RFP No. \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_**

**Offeror:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Reviewer:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions:** Evaluation of technical proposals will be based upon analysis of the offeror's proposal in relation to the specific criteria contained in Section M—"Evaluation Factors for Awards," of the RFP. This evaluation sheet is keyed to those criteria. Reviewers should record their evaluation of each proposal in terms of its strengths and weaknesses, i.e., the degree to which the proposal possesses or lacks the attributes set forth in the "Factors for Award." Point scores are to be assigned to each evaluation factor as indicated below.

Reviewer comments should be provided in the spaces below to indicate the basis for the scoring of the proposal and any other pertinent observations.

	Score	
	Maximum	Actual
<b><u>Factor 1—Offeror's Experience and Qualifications</u></b>	30	
<b>High:</b> (16-30 Points) Recent (past 2 years) experience in all or substantially all technical areas in which successful performance of the contract requires expertise including specifically _____, _____, _____, and _____.	30	
<b>Medium:</b> (6-15 Points) Experience in no more than half the required areas of technical expertise.	15	
<b>Low:</b> (0-5 Points) No or minimal experience in the required areas.	5	
<b>Narrative:</b>		



## 6 FAH-2 H-365 Exhibit H-365 — Continued

Technical Evaluation—RFP No. \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Offeror: \_\_\_\_\_ Reviewer: \_\_\_\_\_

	Score	
	Maximum	Actual
<b><u>Factor 2—Individual Staff Experience</u></b>	50	
<b>High:</b> (26-50 Points) Named staff committed to the contract work collectively have experience in all required fields of expertise, with most of staff highly qualified in more than field.	50	
<b>Medium:</b> (11-25 Points) Named staff collectively have experience in all required fields but individuals have little or moderate experience in more than one field.	25	
<b>Low:</b> (0-10 Points) Named staff collectively has moderate or little experience in specified fields; few individuals have any experience in more than one field.	10	
<b>Narrative:</b>		

## 6 FAH-2 H-365 Exhibit H-365 — Continued

Technical Evaluation—RFP No. \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Offeror: \_\_\_\_\_ Reviewer: \_\_\_\_\_

	Score	
	Maximum	Actual
<b>Factor 3—Project Management Methods</b>	20	
<b>High:</b> (11-20 Points) Offeror provides detailed plan clearly showing: proposed breakdown of work into segments and schedule for accomplishing each stage of the work; proposed quality to be used; management controls and inspection system to permit early detection and correction of deficiencies; and, an effective progress reporting system.	20	
<b>Medium:</b> (6-20 Points) Offeror provides a general outline of the proposed manner of conducting the which appears adequate.	10	
<b>Low:</b> (0-5 Points) Offeror either provides no information on proposed methods, or approach described is unsuitable or deficient.	5	
<b>Narrative:</b>		